

**TO: Honorable Sen. Beth Bye and Rep. Toni Walker,
And the Members of the Appropriations Committee**

Testimony in **FAVOR** of **SB816**

An Act Establishing a Minimum Level of Funding Under the Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula

Thursday, April 2, 2015

The time to adjust the current inequities in the ECS grant formula is long overdue. Haddam, along with 18 other significantly underfunded towns throughout the state, finds itself once again in a precarious situation, forced decisions about how to adequately fund both our schools and our town, both of which are operating on a tighter and tighter shoestring every year.

While the formula was originally instituted to "level the playing field" amongst the towns in our state when it comes to funding available for education, failure to keep the formula current and reflective of each town's economic factors has resulted in a playing field that is more uneven than ever. The closure of the Yankee Nuclear Power Plant years ago resulted in a loss of significant business tax revenue to our town. Yet the ECS grant formula was never updated to account for that significant loss. Not only is it a challenge to meet the needs of our students in a fiscally responsible manner year after year without adequate funding, but the resulting impact on local tax rates has a secondary negative impact on our town's economy, making it more difficult to attract businesses. And the cycle will continue until the legislature takes corrective action.

Understanding that the formula has complications, a fair place to start fixing the problem would be to fund the most underfunded communities up to the 50% mark. This bill will be the first step in getting the ECS funding formula back on track and will show the people of Connecticut you truly intend to make the system fair once again.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss this important issue.

Sincerely,

David and Erika Fleig

12 Teaberry Ct.

Higganum, CT 06441